

### **Clara Belle Modlin**

With input from her daughter

Clara Belle Modlin, daughter of Cecil Edward Modlin and Clara Veronica Knowles was born December 27, 1911 in Windsor, NC and died on October 2, 1988 in Farmville, Pitt County, NC. She married Curtis Harper Flanagan on June 17, 1934 in Farmville, NC. Clara and Curtis had a daughter, Clara.

Clara's family lived in eastern NC, first in Windsor then in Greenville for a year when she was 14 and then to Farmville. Her father was in the grocery business and had moved to Farmville to open a store. She met and married Curtis there and spent the rest of her life in that community. She had several brothers one of whom, Carol, lived in Farmville too. Clara finished high school in Farmville and then went to East Carolina Teacher's College (Eacy-Teacy) now East Carolina Univ. where she earned a degree in education and a teacher's certificate. She met Curtis during her last two years in college and after teaching in Elm City, NC they were married. They recalled having a "high old time" courting, often meeting at Dick's Hot Dog Stand in Wilson on a fairly regular basis. That may have been tantamount to splurging since this was during the depression. They were married in the new Farmville Methodist Church at 9:00 in the morning. Curtis claimed that way if it didn't work out; the whole day wouldn't be wasted. What Clara retorted with may or may not be repeatable. This banter characterizes their humor and fun relationship.

Clara was interested in basketball as a sport but did admit that an early passion was playing marbles. When she was young she helped her mother make chicken salad to be sold in her father's grocery. During the depression many people did many things to survive and making the chicken salad is a good example of her resourcefulness. In later years she worked on the tobacco market writing checks to pay the farmers for their tobacco. Work on the market was a seasonal thing. It took many people to fill the staff.

Clara was an excellent cook. She had several things she prepared that could be considered her specialties such as oven barbecued chicken, and country ham. Fortunately her daughter, Clara was able to accumulate many of her recipes, which still work well. She could always laugh and give a hug at the right moment. All this was in spite of a back problem the often required her to wear a brace. She had the full care of her parents as they aged. The only brother in Farmville, Carol, had health problems of his own. She was also a faithful caretaker of her mother in law during her bout with tuberculosis.

Clara was active in the Farmville Methodist Church, the Literary Club and community affairs. She gave much time to unfortunate people in the community and her church's missions. She was always ready to help any of the family in times of sickness and for other reasons. She loved her family and was an alert homemaker who made her husband proud of her. As the only daughter, her brothers didn't have any trouble with that either. Her daughter remembers she spent most of her life looking after others.